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Fatal Necessity:

O R,

LIBERTY Regain'd.

A

TRAGEDY.

Patent No. 100,000



LIBERTY BELL

A

TRADE MARK

FATAL NECESSITY:

OR,

LIBERTY Regain'd.

A

TRAGEDY:

As it was

Once acted in *ROME*

For the

Sake of FREEDOM and VIRTUE.

Collected from *VERTOT's* History of the
Revolutions in the *Roman Republick*. ~~✱~~

——— *Experiar quid concedatur in illos,
Quorum Flaminiâ tegitur cinis, atque Latinâ.*
Juv. Sat. I. 1701

D U B L I N:

Printed for GEORGE FAULKNER in *Essex-*
street, over-against the *Bridge*.

M D C C X L I I.

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T O

CHARLES EDWIN, Esq;

S I R,



S H A L L make no
more Apology for the
Freedom I take in ad-
dressing this Drama-
tick Essay to You, than I did when
I went to join my Voice to elect
you, one of our Representatives

A 3

in

in this Parliament. It was You, who so strenuously asserted the Cause of FREEDOM in Election, we thought the *most* worthy of defending it in that Place, where our *Liberties* are most necessary to be preserved.

WE have repos'd in You a Trust of the highest Nature and Importance ; we have put our *Fortunes* and *Freedom* voluntarily in Your Power, and hope You will withstand every Measure which seems destructive to either. It is not enough to oppose *Excise-Schemes*, *Standing Armies*, *Useless Fleets*, *Pensions*, &c. but also to endeavour, as much as in You lies, to lessen the Weight of TAXES, which so heavily oppress us. And if any Great Men in Power have
abused

DEDICATION. iii

abused the Confidence reposed in them, either by the KING or PEOPLE, we hope you will bring them to an Accompt. Examine strictly, how they have strained their Authority, or misapply'd, or squander'd away the *Publick Treasure*; or what they have neglected to do, to the Shame and Dishonour of the Nation: And we expect the CORRUPTOR and the CORRUPTED will have that *impartial* Justice done them, which the Nature of their Crimes deserve.

You will pardon these Hints, and we doubt not but that you will improve them to our Advantage. You will then fulfil the Expectations we have of You, from this Dawn of LIBERTY: You will be

A 4 attended

iv DEDICATION.

attended in all Places with the
Prayers of Millions ; and more
particularly of the Inhabitants of
the *City and Liberty of Westminster* ; and among those, the most
fervent from,

S I R,

Your Obedient

and Faithful Servant,

An independent Elector.

P R E-

P R E F A C E.

AS the Story of Appius and Virginia is so well known, not only from its having been the Cause of the Second great Revolution in the Roman Republick; but also from its being the Subject of a Tragedy wrote long since by the severest Critic—— I shall therefore say, that I copy'd it from VERTOT, ——without making any other Apology for relating it in this Dramatick Manner—— I have endeavour'd to keep the History full in View, without diviating from it, or straining any Circumstance or Character in it—— and, I hope, there is no Appius or CLAUDIUS in this Kingdom of FREEDOM, to whom it can give Offence.

It is impossible for two Persons, to write upon one Subject, but there must be a Similitude in the Relation or the Characters, or else there must be a Deviation from the Story, if it is Historical: And if a close Similitude should appear between this Essay and Mr. Dennis's APPIUS in that Point, I must impute it to Chance; for I had neither read, nor seen, his till I had finish'd mine. And indeed, when I mention that Performance, I could wish there was a nearer Affinity between us in the Loftiness of the Thoughts, and Diction; but mine has too many Faults to bear a Comparison with his. But if it merit not the Fate of too many Essays of this Kind, I am content.—— And if the Reader can be satisfy'd in the Perusal, without the severest Censure, the End I propos'd to myself in this Essay is fully answered.

I am, &c.

Persons Represented.

M E N.

APPIUS, First *Decemvir*, privately in love with *Virginia*.

MARC. CLAUDIUS, Pretended Master to *Virginia*.

ICILIUS, Betrothed to *Virginia*.

VALERIUS, } Assertors of *Liberty*, and Enemies
HORATIUS, } to the *Decemvirs*.

VIRGINIUS, A Centurion in the Army, Father to *Virginia*.

NUMITORIUS, Uncle to *Virginia*.

Guards, Attendance, &c.

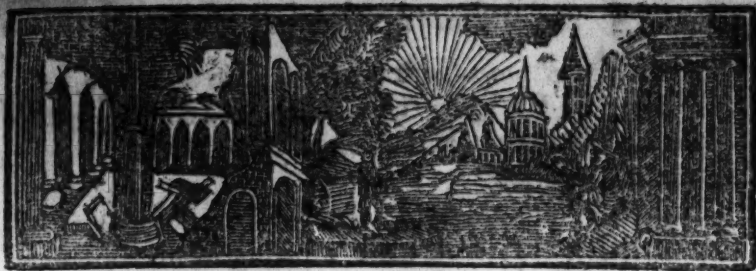
W O M E N.

VIRGINIA, Daughter to *Virginius*.

HONESTA, her Nurse.

CORNELIA, Niece to *Claudius*: Gives Testimony in
the *Forum* against *Virginia*.

The SCENE in R O M E.



FATAL NECESSITY.

O R,

Liberty Regain'd.

ACT I. SCENE I.

NUMITORIUS *and* VALERIUS.

NUMITORIUS.



WELL met, *Valerius*; these unhappy
Times
Make Friendship cool, dissolve the
social Cement;
The Tie of Blood is forgot, and Human
Kind
Turns cruel. Oh *Valerius*! where's
the Laws,
The Rights, the *sacred Liberty* of *Rome*?
They are wrested from us; Tyrants lock them up,
Usurp the Government, and make us Slaves.
Where

Where is the *Roman* Courage? Sunk in Bondage:
By Force, by Violence the bold *Decemvirs*
Still keep the Reins, and *Rome* is left a Prey
To their Ambition.

Val. I've long observ'd
The tow'ring Pride of these aspiring Men,
These bold invaders of our Liberty——
They've stopt at nothing, *base* or *infamous*,
To lord it o'er us with Tyrannick Sway,
Led by their *Prima Decemvir* Appius.

Num. Curse on his Pride, his artful boundless Pride!
'Tis He, *Valerius*, that ambitious Man,
That *bribes* these Villains to undo their Country.
With what dissimulative, artful Ways,
He rose to govern!—What a feign'd Pretence
And Show of Love for Liberty and *Rome*
Glow'd in his Outside Form!—To play the Tyrant,
To swell ambitious in his lawless Sway,
His Levée throng'd with mean, dependent Tools,
And even the Tribunes, Consuls, sunk in Slaves,
And tamely bow the Neck to *Him* and Bondage.

Val. Believe it not; I hope, we still can boast
Some Blood of our Forefathers left in *Rome*,
To curb this *Appius*, and protect the State
When Time shall offer——

Num. Ah! I wish the Time,
The Tyrant's Crimes will soon require it of you.
How often have I mingled with the Crowd;
To gain Admittance to expostulate,
And show th'Oppressor all his *publick* Crimes,
Tyrannick Usurpation in the State,
The People's Hatred, and his impious Greatness,
But still deny'd Access!——I find my Cares,
My Wishes for the *Publick* Good, are lost;
Rome cannot long subsist: The Bankrupt State,
Oppress'd with heavy Taxes, loss of Commerce,
Of Friends, of Credit destitute, 's become
The Scorn of ev'ry petty Tyrant Pow'r
That's leagu'd against us——

Val.

Val. Numitorius, still

We seek for better Days, and Liberty
And glorious Freedom from their servile Chains.

Num. Oh for some happy Cause to mark the Way,
The great, transcendent Path; to Fame and Freedom
For the good of *Rome*!

Val. What ill Success

Attends our Arms! defeated, put to flight,
Their Camp abandon'd, and their Baggage left
For Plunder to the *Sabines*! ——— Such our Fate
Under such Leaders, who usurp Command.

Num. Curse on such Leaders; such despotick Pow'r
Cannot continue long. They call for Help,
Fly to the Gates of *Rome*, and ask her Aid:
But, e're my Soul shall stoop to join their Wishes,
Perdition take me.

Val. *Rome* shall be a Witness,

The Blood of old *Valerius* still survives,
Of him who drove the *Tarquins* out of *Rome*;
That Blood yet warms the Veins of his Descendents,
And the same Courage, Zeal for Liberty,
And Gods, protectors to inspire our Souls,
May grant the same Success; and still we hope
A People jealous of their ancient Freedom
Will ne'er desert us, in so just a Cause.

Num. To what vile Ends they prostitute their
Pow'r!

They tamely bear the *Sabines* Depredations,
Who seize our Vessels as they pass the *Fiber*
Freighted with Men and Arms, or with Provision:
There ev'n in sight of all the *Roman* Camp,
They are sunk in Cowardice, or else with-held,
By *Appius*' Pow'r, from seeking their Defence:
And 'tis reported, he has abused his Trust,
Has robb'd and misapply'd the Publick Treasure,
And squander'd it 'mongst fawning Sycophants,
His *Dupes* and *Tools*, the servile *Senators*,
Who still oppress us with the Weight of Taxes,
To feed these cringing *Knaves*, who bribe their Voice,
And

And screen his Villanies: For when the Arms
Of glorious *Romans* are by Treaties vile
Bound up, and sheath'd by cowardly Conventions,
What more have we to dread?

Val. Oh sinking *Rome*!

Let me not be a Witness of thy Fall:
Let us retire to your Country Seat
Or bravely we'll demand of them our Freedom,
Or seek a Refuge in some happier Clime,
Where Innocence and Virtue bless the Soil.

Num. Love of my Country still forbids that
Thought.

Let me not fly, and leave it quite deserted;
At least the *common* Good of injur'd *Rome*
May want my Aid. While *Numitorius* lives,
Let me not leave it quite a Prey to Tyrants.
Perhaps on me alone the Lot may fall
To wrest her from their Hands, and once restore
Her sinking Freedom to her Sons with Fame.

Val. Improve that Thought—Ha! here *Horatius*
comes.

NUM. VALER. and to them HORATIUS.

Val. Welcome, *Horatius*, we are Friends to *Rome*,
And seek for Freedom—What's the gen'ral News?

Hor. Her weary'd Senators, who fought her Good,
And breath'd for Liberty with arduous Warmth:
Who bravely dar'd, t'accuse the bold *Decemvir*
Of all his Publick Crimes before the Senate,
Those Glorious Patriots, still will aid the Cause,
Will join our Counsels, and will lead us forth,
To seek the Restoration of our Laws.

Num. What say the Soldiers?

Hor. The Contagion flies

Through all the Camp—Provisions some demand,
Some Arms, and some their Pay, which by Neglect
Or viler Purposes, has been detain'd;
And ev'n their Murmurs threaten a Revolt.
Some call for *Consuls*, to direct the State;

Some

Some a *Dictator* ; others to restore
The ancient *Tribunes*——

Num. Blest Occasion offers
To rouse their Courage to assert their Rights.

Val. I've long revolv'd the Thought, have dwelt
upon't,

And taken all Occasions to enforce it ;
With secret Pleasure taught them to complain ;
Have fill'd their Minds with nothing but the Crime
Of these *Decemvirs* ; still affirm'd, the Cause
Of all the Ills they suffer'd——sprung from them,
Such bad Success from their Mismanagement.

Hor. Now is the Time, *Valerius*, to improve it
And press it home—with Reason you may urge,
How we are sunk in Slavery and Bondage,
Neglected or disdain'd by the *Decemvirs* ;
Coldly deny'd to share the publick Trust.
Bid them stand up for Liberty and Freedom ;
To Men *born* free, it is a glorious Claim.

Val. *Horatius*, I have urg'd what Reason ought,
And they despise their Leaders ;——I have shewn
That all the Mischiefs of the fatal Plague
Which lately rag'd in *Rome*, and made such Havock,
Were nothing to the Evils which we suffer
Under their Tyranny.

Hor. Spoke like a *Roman* !
'Tis you who long have serv'd the State in Arms :
So many Battles fought in her Defence,
Are more regarded by those honest Soldiers,
Than a *Dictator*, or a proud *Decemvir*.
You then, *Valerius*, was belov'd by all ;
Your Conduct gentle, affable, and free ;
And when requir'd, your Actions nobly Great.

Val. I would not boast, *Horatius* ; yet my Arms
Are not enfeebled quite, nor Judgment lost ;
For even the Tyrant *Appius* would consult me :
Repeated promises, and outward Shew
Of real Friendship, gild his Intercessions.

Hor.

Hor. Curse on his artful, mean Diffimulation:
 'Tis to entrap you in some Snare of State,
 Make you some *Tool* of Power, to cut you off.
Valerius, should our Hopes of you be blasted,
Rome may be lost: *Your* Courage now revives
 The native Valour of the *Roman* Arms:
 Led on by you, we then might boast of Freedom.

Val. What says *Horatius*? By Heav'n I'll ne'er
 desert it:

Freedom and Liberty shall be my Aim.
 Not a *Decemvir*, not all their power usurpt,
 Shall ever bribe me to betray my Country:
Rome still shall find me faithful as *Horatius*.
 But against the *Sabines*, or the Foes to *Rome*,
 In her Defence this Life I would lay down,
 Should she require it.

Num. So should every *Roman*
 Dare seek his Death to oppose the common Foe.
 They steal not on us with obsequious Smiles,
 With fawning Flattery, or forc'd Applause;
 But open arm'd, with Boldness ask our Freedom.
 But the false, hypocritick, smiling Villains,
 That with fair Promises seek to betray you,
 'Tis *these*, *Valerius*, which should arm your Soul
 With Valour and Defence.

Val. My worthy Friend,
 'Tis those, with Indignation I despise;
 But when my bleeding Country wants my Aid,
Valerius shall shew, that *Rome* and Liberty
 Are worth his Care.

Hor. *Rome* now demands it of you:
 We've Reason to revolt, to rise in Arms.
 Demand them to restore our ancient Laws,
 Abolish the *Decemvirs*, reinstate
 The *Tribunes*, *Consuls*, and the People's Rights.

Val. Ha! my *Horatius*; you have rous'd my
 Soul:
 That glorious Thought Ennobles all my Hopes,
 And promises Success. — Let us disperse,

And

And mingle with the Tumult—Come, my Friends,
Let's toſs the Fewel 'mongſt the liſt'ning Crowd ;
'This Sword, unſheath'd, will warm the Hero's Breſt ;
'Twill *Glow*, expand, and flame into a Blaze.

Num. Oh Friends to Freedom, Liberty, and *Rome* !
This Aſt of Glory, to preſerve the State,
This Virtue, will in future Ages live
The great Example to a Realm oppreſs'd
With Tyrants, or deſpotick Pow'r ſubdu'd,
'Tis Liberty we ſeek ;

Hor. 'Tis that, or Death.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

ICILIUS and VIRGINIA.

ICILIUS.

V*irginia*, kind, endearing, faithful Maid !
Impatient have I wiſh'd for this bleſt Hour,
Thou fair Example of a *Roman* Soul.
How ſlowly rolls the Time, 'till from the Camp
Your Father will return to joyn our Hands !
Our Hearts already are——

Virg. *Icilius*, yes,

I hope they're firmly ty'd, beyond all Power
To break, or diſunit :—the Thoughts of that
Still keep alight the glowing Flame of Love,
You taught me to indulge the pleaſing Paſſion.

Ici. What more have I to wiſh to make me happy ?
Bleſs'd with your Love, in kind Return for mine,
Makes up the Period of my proudeſt Hopes :
What can be wanting (faireſt) to compleat it ?

Virg. We know not that, my Father's Danger ſtill
Riſes in View, or ſome unhappy Dream,
Drops in to mingle Sorrow with my Hope.
Even when I place imagin'd Blifs before me,
Some ſad Idea riſes in my Mind,
To cut off all my pleaſing fancy'd Good.
Sure, my *Icilius*, there's ſome ruling Power
That dictates to our Fancy future Evils.

Ici.

Ici. Yes, my *Virginia*, some such Power may be ;
But what has Innocence like *yours* to fear ?
What Evil now unknown can fall on you,
While *Rome* shall stand secure ?

Virg. Something amiss
Sits heavy on my Breast, and sinks my Spirits,
Where'er I think upon my absent Father :
May Heav'n protect him !

Ici. He, I hope is safe.
But why, *Virginia*, with imagin'd Ills
Do you break your Quiet ? Is it not enough
To grieve when Danger's present to your View,
And not to call in absent Evils to you ?
You may remember (e're our Parents knew
The pleasing Hours we pass'd) how oft by stealth
The Bliss we had was mingled with our Care,
With anxious Cares, the Fear of being known ;
Groundless Suspicions and Perplexities,
Existing only in our own Ideas.
Come, my *Virginia*, let me dry those Eyes ;
Nature has made them for another Use,
To charm and awe the gazing World withal.

Virg. Fain would I hide the Weakness of my Sex,
And learn of you that Fortitude of Soul.
Teach me, *Icilius*, how to imitate
Your manly Courage, your heroic Mind,
That *Roman* Greatness, Tenderness and Love ;
Your generous Friendship, all your noble Virtues.

Ici. Those I learnt of you ;—Courage and Fortitude
Are what I boast deriv'd from our Forefathers ;
These are our Sex's Right, a *Roman's* Claim :
Virtue—with Pride I copy'd from yourself ;
Untainted Virtue ! —*This* has endless Charms ;
And he that would through Ages live in Fame,
Must on *that* Basis build the rising Pile,
Glow in his Goodness, Tenderness, and Love,
And generous Acts diffus'd to Humankind.
If these are Virtues, such my Soul approves,
'Tis your Example all my Actions sway.

Virg.

Virg. It is your manly Courage, which I want,
That *Appius*!— [Fainting.]

Ici. Hah! look up—*Virginia*, speak :
What of that Tyrant to the State of *Rome*?

Virg. Oh! my *Icilius*, he has oft of late
Took all Occasions to be where I am,
Offer'd his Service, has by Prayers and Threats
Solicited my Love :—and even now,
A Message by his Servant gave me Notice
That he intends a Visit.

Ici. Oh *Virginia*!
He dare not act unseemly, fear not him,
Your *Virtues* will confound and awe the Tyrant—
But should his Power in *Rome*, his *Impious* Power,
Give sanction to Offence 'gainst Modesty :
By Heav'n I swear, the Traytor should repent
His daring Villainy—All *Rome* should see
The just Reward of all his lawless Crimes.

Virg. Within my self, I'm safe from any Ill,
Arm'd with my natal Virtue : From that Spring
Flows all my Comfort—And, in Virtue's Cause,
I have a *Roman* Soul, and dare to die.

Ici. Thou spotless Innocence! my Doubts are clear'd.

Virg. Come, my *Icilius*, poor *Honest*a waits
Impatient my Return. With tender Care
She nurs'd and brought me up, indulg'd my Wishes,
And even my fondest Wishes, when for you
I sigh'd, and told the Secrets of my Soul.
That faithful Servant merits my Regard.

Ici. Yes, my *Virginia* ; Truth like hers is rare.
But yet indulge a Moment to my Passion.
Let me gaze on thee, lovely charming Maid ;
Such Transports even the Gods themselves might envy.

Virg. Why, my *Icilius*, will you press me thus ?
I must be gone.

Ici. Endearing Maid, farewell ;
Reluctant I resign you from these Arms,
To Friendship, Honour, Truth, and Love, and Vir-
tue.

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

APPIUS and CLAUDIUS.

APPIUS.

UNstable are the Times, my worthy *Claudius*,
 It is unsafe and dangerous to be Great.
 The giddy Multitude are ever prone
 To Change and Discontent. Each puny Soul
 Thinks he is accomplish'd to direct a State.
 Heaven knows, with what Reluctance I accepted
 The weighty Task, and still support the Load
 Of publick Cares, content, for publick Good.

Claud. What are the Murm'ings of the vulgar
 Crowd,

When led by Faction, and designing Men?
 They're only taught t'approve what such esteem;
 Nor knowing why, condemn what *those* dislike:
 But such I think unworthy *your* Regard.

App. Yes, *Claudius*, such they seem when first they
 rise:

But, like a Spark that gathers to a Blaze,
 They're safer quench'd, when timely Help's apply'd,
 Before the catching Flame expands its Force,
 Than when its raging Fury's at a Height.

Claud. That's certain, was there Cause for such
 Precaution:

But now, I hope, no Danger can require
 A Means for Violence. Your Friends in *Rome*,
 Your *Lictors* join'd with them, may guard you safe
 From all Attempts: Or, were you to secure
 The Leaders of the Faction——

App. Publick Rigour

I disapprove; besides, they are esteem'd
 And worship'd for their Valour by the Crowd,
 As Guardians of their Liberty and *Rome*.
 The headstrong Tumult would protect their Chiefs,
 And cry for *Justice* and a Publick Tryal:

They

They are taught to idolize these Sons of Tumult,
And sow Sedition through the list'ning Ranks :
'Tis these the madding Vulgar deify.

You know *Dentatus*——

Claud. What of him, my Lord ?

App. Curse on his Valour, every Soldier loves him ;
And he's set on by some superior Traitor,
To mingle with the Crowd and feed Contention.
The Soldiers disobey their Leaders Orders,
And murmur thro' the Camp with loud Complaints.
They take Occasion from domestick Feuds,
To weaken our Designs against the *Sabines*,
And even desert the Camp, complain of Want,
And boldly tell their Leaders they're born free ;
Nor will they stoop to their usurp'd Command.
All this *Dentatus* taught them.

Claud. Heaven forbid !

I've often heard *Dentatus* much applauded
For his heroick Acts, and Love for *Rome*.

App. Yes, there's his Artfulness ; a feign'd Pretence.
He pleads with Vehemence in his Country's Cause,
The better to conceal his base Designs:
It was for this I made *Dentatus* Legate,
And under Colour sent him to the Camp.
His long-distinguish'd Service in the State,
Gives him a Pride superior to the Vulgar ;
Puff'd up with this, his Arrogance will rise
To disapprove the Conduct of the Generals.
They have my private Orders to prevent
His doing farther Mischief.

Claud. Prudent Thought !

That casts the Blame a farther Distance from you—
Should it be done.

App. Yes, *that* is the secret Pleasure.
To hold the Reins of Government secure
From envious Eyes, to trace its hidden Springs,
And know my Friend, I've always held it prudent
And best, to gain a popular Applause,
By outside Gentleness and Affability,

To

To win Affection by obsequious Carriage,
 And Shew of Sanctity ; or, if that fail,
 To bribe the leading Traytors into Silence :
 Yes, *Claudius*, 'tis this outside Tinsel Lustre,
 This glittering Blaze, that awes the giddy Vulgar,
 And makes the trembling Coward wear his Chains.
 And yet, 'midst all this glitt'ring Pomp of State,
 A Woman, *Claudius*, has alarm'd my Soul !

Claud. And can a Woman a Disquiet give ?
 Oh *Appius* ! what is Pow'r when 'tis confin'd ?
 Who is this wond'rous Woman ? If a Vestal,
 There may be ways found out to try her Virtue.
 Accept my faithful Service.

App. *Claudius*, I will.

Know then, *Virginia*, that enchanting Maid,
 I oft by Accident of late have seen ;
 And every Time new Beauties to admire,
 Rise in my View : I could for ever gaze
 And feed my ravish'd Fancy with the Bliss ;
 But that's deny'd me, she still shuns my Sight,
 Looks coldly on me, and upbraids my Passion.

Claud. *Virginia* !

App. Ha ! why start you, *Claudius*, thus ?

Claud. My Lord—I—doubt—

App. Furies ! doubt what ?

Scruples and Doubts must now be laid aside :
 You must assist me—

Claud. There is one Objection :

'Tis not her rigid Virtue, there's a Way
 To conquer that—But 'tis a dangerous Task,
 'Tis Policy alone can make her yours :
 She is, my Lord, betroth'd to young *Icilius*.
 Their Parents mutually approv'd their Choice,
 And only *Hymen's* Rites are unperform'd :
 Should Violence be us'd, my Lord, all *Rome*
 Would arm in her Defence.

App. What must be done ?

Let tame Humanity be thrown aside,
 And made a Sacrifice to my Desires.

Virginia's

Virginia's mine; should all the *Roman* Arms
Join to oppose me, I would boldly on,
And gain the Prize, or perish in th' Attempt.

Claud. Oh *Appius*, hear me! 'tis a daring Tryal:
Our civil Discord would augment the Flame;
The Laws of *Rome*, and *Nature* are against you.
And nought but Blood and Slaughter must ensue.
Let Prudence lead you to the wish'd-for Joy;
It is not only safest to be cautious,
But by some feign'd Pretence, 'tis in your Power
To act with seeming Justice.—Let me see—
—I have a Niece who lives hard by *Virginia*,
Whose Intimacy with her, frequent Visits,
And that familiar Freedom which subsists
Between the Sex, perhaps by fair Persuasion
May warp her Virtue: But, if that should fail,
'Tis Stratagem alone can aid your Cause.

App. *Claudius*, I stand convicted of my Rashness:
The Fondness of a *Lover* is a Frenzy;
He acts as inconsistent with himself
As the Delirious: it is your Niece's Friendship
Seems most to favour my intended Views:
For even this Hour I sent a private Message,
In which a formal Visit was propos'd:
In this last Effort, I had treasur'd up
Ten thousand Schemes to gratify my Hopes.
But hasten to you Niece, prepare the Way
For my more kind Reception.

Claud. I obey
With Pleasure your Commands, and rest assur'd
Your Purpose, or by Policy, or Fraud,
You shall obtain—

App. My worthy Friend, farewell. [*Exit Claudius.*
—Curse on this foolish Passion! Am I caught
In my own Snares at last? Where will it end?
At first I only sported with the Thought,
And play'd the Lover's Part, which now I act,
In Earnest act, and raise my Soul in Form,
To Rage, to Fury, Madness, and Despair.

—So

—So the poor simple Fly round the Blaze
 In various Circles frolicks up and down :
 Delusive Images at length arise,
 And caught unwarily, the Insect dies.
 If such *my* Fate, I seek the pleasing Pain,
 Nor will I shun, but glory in the Flame.

End of the FIRST ACT.



ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

ICILIUS and HORATIUS.

HORATIUS.

[*Entering.*]

WHY is *Icilius* in this pensive Posture?
Can *Rome* be worth his Care?

Ici. It is, *Horatius*,

Worthy of mine, and every *Roman's* Care,
That boasts of Liberty, or being Free:
While Tyrants rule, and seek to make us Slaves
To their Ambition, and their lawless Crimes,
How can a *Roman* Soul be unconcern'd?

Hor. O think, *Icilius!* there are still in *Rome*
Those who can justly boast of Liberty.
By Heav'n, I dare, and I despise their Pow'r;
My Soul shall never stoop to wear their Chains.

Ici. You boast of Freedom, what is Liberty?
Is it to walk, and breathe the common Air?
To have Food and Rayment even to Profuseness?
These the Inhabitants of every Clime
Possess like you, and claim an equal Share.

Hor. No; 'tis not those I call a *Roman's* Freedom;
'Tis to enjoy our antient Native Laws;
To live possess'd of every *Roman's* Right
Deriv'd from our Forefathers: This the Claim
Of every Soul born Free: 'Tis Death alone
Should wrest THAT from us, tho' the Tyrants Will
Should daringly usurp it—

Ici. Yes, *Horatius*,
That is a *Roman's* Liberty indeed,
But THAT we boast not of. See, the *Decemvirs*
Assume a Pow'r not granted by the People,
And lord it o'er us.

B

Hor.

Hor. Curse their Pow'r, *Icilius*.
 This Sword shall make a Path in *Rome* for Freedom.
 Is there a *Roman* but will force his Way,
 Where he's restrain'd?— And let Perdition take me,
 If even a Brother's Life shall be secure,
 Should he oppose me—And now there is a Time
 That favours a Revolt—The Soldiers murmur,
 They want Provision, and in open Terms
 Loudly complain; and shall we tamely sit
 And hear their Wrongs? What says *Icilius* to it?

Ici. *Horatius*, I approve the noble Thought.
 While *Roman* Courage lasts, that Blood deriv'd
 From our Ancestors, still with Freedom runs,
 Each Vein shall lose its last for Liberty :
 Propose the Way to gain it—

Hor. Ha! *Valerius*
 With Haste! and discontentment in his Looks!
 Something of Moment——

Enter to them Valerius.

Val. Friends to falling *Rome*,
 When will the Crimes of these aspiring Men,
 These cruel Tyrants, these *Decemvirs*, end?

Hor. What Mischiefs more, *Valerius*, fall on *Rome*?

Val. *Siccius Dentatus*, that renown'd *Plebeian*,
 By Fraud has been destroy'd by *Roman* Hands,
 By *Appius*, that vile Tyrant of the State.

Hor. Death and Perdition be his just Reward!
 While there's a *Roman* breathes for Liberty,
 That Godlike Hero's Death shall be reveng'd.

Ici. How did the Traitor compass his Designs?

Val. *Dentatus* talk'd with Freedom of their Pow'r,
 And stirr'd up a Sedition 'mongst the Soldiers
 Against their Leaders. (The better to conceal
 His base Design) *Appius* pretends a Friendship
 And sends *Dentatus* Legate to the Camp,
 But privately directed the *Decemvirs*
 To cut him off——

Hor. Curse on his treacherous Soul!
 Is this the Warrior's Fate? is this Reward

Of Dangers imminent, and dreadful Toil,
To those who have been nobly great in Arms?
Who knows to what their Crimes may next extend?
Forgive my Zeal, *Valerius*—pray proceed—

Val. Dentatus soon arriv'd with his Commission:
His Orders were, to aid them in their Counsels,
And speak with Freedom. He survey'd the Camp,
And disapprov'd the Situation most.
They gave Consent for him to mark a Spot
More safe, and more conveniently dispos'd.
Dentatus, unsuspecting, takes a Party
(Design'd by the *Decemvirs*) to attend him,
And finds a Place some Distance from the Camp;
A Mountain guarded, half the Northern Side
The *Tyber* runs beneath; Nature had form'd
The Place secure: and here he sat him down.
The Villians gave a Signal, and at once
Attackt him as he sat.—He drew his Sword,
And bravely dealt Destruction on their Heads;
Till weak with Slaughter, and o'erpower'd by Numbers,
The Heroe fell.

Hor. Are there not righteous Gods,
Oh, injur'd *Rome*! to aid thy sacred Cause,
The great, the glorious Cause of Liberty?
Dentatus! to thy Memory I give
This last, best Tribute to a *Roman* Soul;
A Heart that shall revenge your injur'd Name,
And rouse Revenge in every *Roman's* Breast.
Come on, my Friends, let's kindle up the Flame,
Whose Heat shall blast these Tyrants of the State.

Ici. Yes, good *Horatius*, Crimes like these deserve
No Mercy here:—and yet, I fear, they're not
The least that *Appius* will be guilty of.
I may be destin'd next, perhaps, to fall,
To fill the Number of his impious Deeds.

Val. Why you alone, *Icilius*?

Ici. I have Proofs
To sway my Judgment thus.—I stand between
Him, and a fatal Ruin:—one must fall.

Hor. Your cool Temerity seems illy tim'd.
Will you recede, and tamely stand a Neuter,
And see your Country's Fall ?

Ici. No more, my Friends,
My Cause alone is woven with my Country's :
On it, my Good, my future Bliss depends.
'Tis on *Virginia's* Fate.—The Tyrant's Lust
Has center'd there.—*Horatius*, 'tis my Lot !

Val. Impossible ! *Icilius* : Jealousy
Sees things imperfect ; makes a Phantom real,
And oft misguides the Mind.

Ici. By Heav'n 'tis true !
And even this very Hour may be the last,
Or Loss of Life, or, what is worse, her *Fame*.
The Tyrant oft of late has took occasion
To introduce himself into her Presence :
By Promises, and Prayers, demands her Love ;
This Morning too, a Messenger was sent,
To let her know that *Appius* would be there,
Desir'd to have Admittance, and in Form
Requir'd an Interview : What could be done ?
The Tyrant's Power admits of no Denial.
Her rigid Virtue is my only Comfort :
But Force !—Who knows how far the impious Traytor
May carry his Designs—would *you* assist,
Now is the Time to strike for Liberty.

Hor. Enough, my Friend ; let's instant to her House ;
If *he* has not already gain'd Admittance,
We'll intercept him ; or till he returns,
Wait for him.—There—One Blow for Freedom,
Aim'd at his treacherous Heart ; this steady Arm
Shall plunge the faithful Dagger.—Come, *Icilius*—

[*Kneeling.*

Ici. *Valerius* and *Horatius*, here I swear
By all the Powers which govern Humankind,
(And chiefly those who rule imperial *Rome*)
Nor Rest, nor Food I'll take, nor close these Eyes,
Till I, or *Appius* fall.

Hor. and *Val.* *Kneeling.*] We swear the same.

Hor.

Hor. &c. Rising.] Oh Friends! in Virtue's Cause
may *Love* assist us,
Our Liberty restore, and ancient Laws.
Then shall *Rome* know, what every *Roman* gains,
A Day of Freedom :—Worth an Age in Chains.

S C E N E II.

VIRGINIA and HONESTA.

VIRGINIA.

STILL, good *Honesta*, in my restless Bosom
I find Disquiet : My anxious Thoughts by Day,
And Nightly Dreams, alike perplex my Soul.
As on my Couch I pensive sat this Morn,
A *thousand* Images rose in my Mind,
Insensibly I sunk in silent Sleep :
I thought my *Father* stood with downcast Looks,
And seem'd to gaze upon me ; then in Tears,
To give his Sorrows vent, he cry'd, *Virginia*,
Forgive my Cruelty, thou *virtuous Maid*,
'Tis the last Duty of a mourning *Parent*.
Then drew his Sword, and plung'd it in my Heart.

Hon. Why, my *Virginia*, with your groundless Fears,
Do you bring disquiet on yourself and Friends ?
Was ever Parent's Fondness, or Affection,
More tenderly bestow'd than thine to thee ?
And yet for ever you complain of Dreams,
And shadowy Nothing.

Virg. My unhappy Thoughts,
Honesta, flow involuntary on me,
I wish I could prevent them.

Hon. Sure you might ;
Is not *Icilius*, that good-natur'd Youth,
Enough to warm thy ev'ry *chastest* Thought ?
To whom your Father kindly has bestow'd
Thy Virgin Charms, and soon the nuptial Vow
Will be perform'd : think *him* another Father,
On whom your future Happiness depends.

Virg. Such I wish him : You taught my early Passion
For that blest Man to glow with generous Warmth,
Indulgent to a Fault : But yet my Thoughts
Have never stray'd from *Virtue* : I only strove
In kind Return, a mutual generous Flame,
A virtuous Love ; and if *that* be a Crime,
'Tis all my Conscience can accuse me of.

Hon. That Innocence, will still protect your Person
In ev'ry Tryal, ev'ry Ill of Life,
Which your Imagination can conceive
To your Disquiet——

Virg. Yes, I hope it will :
I'll study to improve your faithful Counsel,
And learn your Precepts: 'twas my Father's Charge
When last we parted ; in his tender Arms
With Fondness he embrac'd me : thus he spake.
“ *Virginia*, hear me. 'Tis my destin'd Lot
“ To serve the State in Arms ; I'll leave you here
“ With your *Honest* : She was ever faithful,
“ And as a Parent train'd you from a Child ;
“ Learn of her all the Virtues of a *Roman*,
“ That *modest Innocence* which charms Mankind,
“ Learn this from her, to bless *Scipio* with.
“ Your Father begs you this”——Then down his Cheeks
The Tears in Silence trickled from his Eyes.
I strictly will obey his last Commands,
And learn from *your* Example to improve
In every Virtue.—Ha ! *Cornelia* coming !
I would not see her—Good *Honest*, say
I'm indispos'd.

[*Exit.*

Hon. Madam, I shall obey you.

S C E N E III.

CORNELIA and HONESTA.

CORNELIA.

WELL, good *Honest*, is *Virginia*'s Mind
Still fixt on young *Scipio*? Much I fear
That fickle Youth's Behaviour. There are those

Who

Who often boast of a peculiar Right,
And vainly speak of Freedom with his Person :
I doubt, *Honest*a, that good-natur'd Maid,
May be deceiv'd——

Hon. Can you suspect her Virtue ?
(But that I dare not think.) Can you believe
A Mind, possess'd of *Innocence* like hers,
Should be seduc'd, to act against its Reason ?

Corn. Yes, *Honest*a : Who knows the subtle Arts,
The base Designs of an ensnaring Tongue ?
Wou'd you believe it ?—E'er I had seen the World,
So as to know its Vices, or the Crimes
Of wicked Men, I thought my *self* secure,
And plac'd my Confidence in my *own* Virtue ;
But was deceiv'd, and nearly being betray'd.
You know, *Honest*a, these are dangerous Times ;
The Vices of Mankind are risen so high,
They glory in them——

Hon. Yes, too much, *Cornelia* :
But yet *Virginia*'s safe, her Ear was never tainted
With any of them.

Corn. There's the greater Danger :
She should so know the Vices of Mankind
As to repulse them ; Yes, *Honest*a, there
Our Sex's great Security depends :
The Warrior guards against his Foes designs,
By knowing first the Stratagems in War.
You ought to let *Virginia* see the World,
'Tis *there* she'll learn Politeness ; there she'll shine,
A Mirror to our Sex ; for I may say
Her Beauties rise superior to them all.

Hon. Yes, such they are. But what are those to *Virtue* ?
That will for ever charm ; the gazing World
Will always find new Graces to admire,
Where *Virtue* is.

Corn. 'Tis something of a Name
To awe the Superstitious into Wonder ;
But that's a Conquest, let me say, our Sex
Will never boast of : For Experience shews,

Such have no other Charm to win Affection,
And want of Beauty is their Claim for Virtue.

Hon. You mean not as you speak, *Cornelia*? Sure,
Virtue has something in itself will please,
Where every other Beauty of the Sex
Has lost its Force: in Virtue, something new
Will ever rise, to please an honest Mind.
Cornelia, you're severe upon our Sex,
To think thus of them.

Corn. (I must side with her) *Aside.*
No; Heav'n forbid!—I think *Virginia* is
A just Exception to them; she can claim
A thousand other Charms, above her Sex,
Besides her Virtue—That delightful Mid
Subdues Mankind—I know of one in *Rome*
In Power and Wealth, and Loveliness of Person,
There's none excels him; yet he pines away
His Hours of Life in tedious Misery,
And languishes in Grief for—fair *Virginia*.

Hon. Forbid it, Heaven! You know she is betroth'd
To young *Scilius*.

Corn. What of that, *Honest*?
This Nobleman can boast, a thousand Gifts
Superior to *Scilius*,—Think of that.

Hon. What can you mean? I think it vile and base
To name Another; whatever he may claim
In Birth or Fortune, yet *Scilius* has
His *Native-Honest-Virtuous-Principles*,
And those are Merits, far above Contempt.

Corn. *Honest*, you are safe;—put off the Mask,
And tell me freely—Are our Sex design'd
For one alone by *Nature*? Look around
The Universe, promiscuously they joyn
The different Tribes, and different Sexes range
To all alike; each Animal approves
Where *Nature* dictates, free and unconfin'd.
But Chains, or Force in Love, *Nature* abhors.
'Tis Madness to attempt—perhaps—

Hon. Thou Monster!

Are

Are these your Lessons to our younger Sex ?
 Are these the Baits with which you *lure* to Vice ?
 The Air is pestilential which you breathe ;
 Infection spreads, where e'er thy tainted Lips
 Thy impious Thoughts divulge : Perdition seize
 Thy rancorous, poisonous and destructive Heart.

[*Exit.*

Corn. alone.] Curse on my evil Genius—in an Hour
 Ill-fated, have I press'd this Business here.
 What shall I say to *Claudius*, how dissemble
 And hide from him, the ill Success I've had ?
 Perhaps on this alone his *Bliss* is plac'd.
 —*Virginia* is a Woman,—like our Sex,
 She's not Invulnerable,—there's a Way
 Still open to Attacks ;—on *that* depends
 The Hopes of Conquest—Yes—A glorious thought—
 Ha ! she moves this Way,—there's still a Scene
 To make for *Appius*, a victorious Day.

S C E N E IV.

VIRGINIA and HONESTA.

VIRGINIA.

WHAT must be done ? The Tyrant's at the Door,
 And asks Admittance to me.

Hon. Though his Power

Is great in *Rome*, he dare not act unseemly :
 Your Charms, your Honour is *Honestia's* Care.
 You are a *Roman*, and your greatest Glory
 Is spotless Virtue ; and, posselt of this,
 Nor Vice, nor Time, nor Death, can ever hurt.
 For as in Death, the Immortal Hero lives,
 The spotless Virgin will in Endless Fame,
 Who liv'd with Virtue—Ha ! [*Knocking without.*
Virg. Be Heaven my Safeguard.

SCENE V.

APPIUS, VIRGINIA, and HONESTA.

APPIUS.

HAIL, fair *Virginia*! Your attractive Charms
Have led me here:

Virginia. To mock the Unfortunate?

App. Fair, spotless Maid, Fortune is at your Will.
Is there in *Rome*, or in the Boundless World,
One Wish, to make you more compleatly blest?

Vir. But one alone, and in your Power to grant.

App. By all the Sacred Deities of *Rome*,
It shall be granted.——

Virg. It is your Absence then;
For that's the greatest Bliss I can enjoy.

App. 'Tis cruel thus to mock the Unfortunate:
To you my artless Tongue sincerely speaks
The broken Accents of a labouring Heart.
Think, dear *Virginia*, it is *Appius* sues,
And begs with ardent Fervency to hear
His humble Complaints, and ease his tortur'd Soul.

Virg. This unbecoming Talk, Sir, suits not me;
I am not of that base and abject Soul:
Nay, were I even your Slave—you cannot force
The unbounded Freedom of my virtuous Mind;
That is a Conquest only Death can make.

App. Could you but know the Tortures of my Soul,
The inward Pangs of Grief, Despair, and Pain,
Which in my Bosom, for your Sake, I feel:
Pity at least you kindly would dispense;
Even that might bring some Respite to my Woe.

Virg. What in my present Conduct do you see?
Or which of all the Actions of my Life
Are stamp'd with Vice, or voluntary Ill?
I tremble at the Word, for even my Thoughts
From that is Free ———

App.

App. —Oh! fair *Virginia*, hear :
I ask for Pity, grant me *that* at least.
Sure, in your tender Bosom, that is left,
That softness of your Sex—

Virg. —But not for you :
Say, is it not mean, unmanly, Coward-like,
Thus to attempt my Honour to seduce ?

App. I would with gentle Means attempt to gain
Esteem at least, if not Return of Love :
But since you disapprove my offer'd Service,
I may perhaps another Method take.—

[*Attempts to lay hold on her.*]

Virg. Are there not righteous Beings, to protect
And guard the Innocent ? with Vengeance arm'd
To blast the Villain that attempt an Act
Rude or unseemly to a virtuous Mind ?

App. Indulge the Joys that Nature kindly sheds
On the gay Spring of Life—Extatick Bliss !
By *Jove*, I feel Divinity itself—
In this Embrace.—

Vir. in Confusion.] Assist me, good *Honest* !
Oh! whither would this monstrous Tyrant force me ?
[*She breaks from him. Appius follows.*]

S C E N E VI.

ICILIUS, HORATIUS, and VALERIUS.

ICILIUS.

IT was *Virginia's* Voice—Where is the Traytor ?
Horatius, guard this Passage, I'll pursue
The daring Tyrant—

Hor. —Be not rash, *ICILIUS*,
We join your Cause—'Tis Liberty and Virtue.

Ici. Oh! let me give a Loose to my Revenge—
I seek alone the glorious Deed to act,
Indulge my Wishes—

Hor. If you still persist,
May all the Gods of *Rome*, protect you safe,

Assist

Assist your Arm, and give new Vigour
To our sacred Cause.

[Exit. Icilius.]

Val. Mark the bold Youth,
Intrepid in his Way; he bravely seeks
Alone to rescue *Rome*—Let us, *Horatius*,
Pursue his Foot-steps, and assist our Friend,
Share in his Danger, and his endless Fame.

Hor. He has a noble Motive to engage
His dauntless Courage in the arduous Task.
It is *Virginia*, that endearing Maid,
That fairest Pattern of excelling Virtue,
Will urge him on—And let me say, *Icilius*,
In Virtue's Cause, who would not risque his Life?
There are ten Thousand hidden Charms in Virtue,
For ever Blooming, and for ever new—

Re-enter Icilius, hastily.

The Tyrant is escaped—— [Drops his Sword, and
leans on Valerius.]

Hor. Where is *Virginia*?

Ha! *Icilius*, speak:—Your Friends request it—

Ici. Why sink I not beneath this Weight of Woe?
And now, with all my Load of Ills accurst,
Die like a *Roman*? — [Catches up his Sword.]

Hor.—Ha! fear the Cause. [Aside.]

Where is the Tyrant fled? Let us pursue
The Guilty Traytor——and at once cut off
A Life polluted, fill'd with endless Crimes.

Ici. It is too late, I fear,—our present Care
Concerns *Virginia* most—That Monster *Claudius*,
Attended with a Guard, in private lay,
Till *Appius* gave a Signal: Then at once
Rush'd in upon her—and her faithful Nurse,
And forc'd them hence; the outer Door's secure,
And Guards attend to stop our Passage hence.

Hor. Come *Romans*, we will force their thickest
Ranks.

No Hostile Hand can antedate our Doom,
Till by the Gods we are condemn'd to fall.
Our Time is fix'd; and when the Fates decree,

No

No Force can we resist, no Power can save us;
The Hero then, and Coward fall alike :
Now Glory summons to the brave Design ;
And where there's Danger, there I must have Part.
'Tis Honour, Virtue, and my Country claims
Heroick Deeds ; and he that bravely falls
In Honour's Cause, for *Glorious-Liberty*,
Nobly acquits his Trust, and lives in Fame.
Come on, my Friends ; the Dangers we still share ;
Freedom and Virtue shall be still our Care.

End of the SECOND ACT.



ACT

 A C T III. S C E N E I.

In Claudius's House.

VIRGINIA and HONESTA.

VIRGINIA.

WHAT have I done to have deserv'd these Ills ?
 Wherein have I offended Gods, or Men,
 To be this wretched, this abandon'd Being ?
 What Power has *Claudius* to confine me here ?
 On what a feign'd, what false Pretence he dares
 To justify his Conduct ?—Heav'n can witness
 I'm guilty of no Crime ;—my absent Friends,
 All *Rome* will testify my Innocence.
 —But, good *Honest*a, I have only you
 To sooth my Grief, and to assuage my Woe :
 I'll try to be contented with my Fate.
 Or if Excess of Sorrow force me down,
 This friendly Dagger—Liberty procures.

[Draws it from her Bosom.]

Hon. Nobly resolv'd ! may *Jove* direct your Arm,
 And Virtue now inspire your Soul to act.
 Might I assist to Glory in his Fall,
 The Tyrant *Appius* too, might Peace restore ;
 For on his Fate depends the Fate of *Rome* ;
 His Fall alone can free us from these Chains.

Virg. Ah poor *Honest*a ! can you think my Soul
 Would stoop so low, to make *them* worth a Thought ?
 No ; far superior is my Purpose bent,
 To Conquest worthy only of Myself :
 It is Myself I purpose to set free
 From the-polluted Tyrants, and these Chains.

My

My Heart already leaps to meet its Point ;
And thus I force it. [*Attempts to stab herself.*

Hon. Ha ! *Virginia*, hold——

This is the last Resort of sad Despair.

Oh, my *Virginia* ! why have I liv'd to see

This fatal Hour ?——Think tender, Innocence,

The Great, the Virtuous, never will despair ;

At least, will long defer th' inglorious Deed.

Think, that *Icilius* through your Bosom falls,

That Dagger gives *Him* Death as well as *You*.

Live for *His* sake, at least preserve your Life ;

The bounteous Gods may yet reserve in store

Some future Bliss, exceeding all your Wishes.

A Time may come, a Time by Heav'n decreed,]

When those who Tyrannize may feel the Pains,

And share the Miseries they give Mankind.

Your Orb of Life is only whirling round

Th'unstable and uncertain Track of Fate :

Its Revolution next may be aloft,

As high in Bliss and Joy, from this fall'n State,

As from the Earth's Center to yon glorious Sun.

Virg. Blest be the Gods ! that pleasing, happy
Thought

Has stop't th' impetuous Torrent of my Grief.

I feel a Tide of Peace flow in upon me,

And raise in Transports my despairing Soul.

I find my *Virtue* swells upon the Stream,

And rides triumphant with a pleasing Gale.

Ye Powers above, what various Changes form

The Fortunes of Mankind ! 'Tis wond'rous all,

Beyond our Comprehension, infinite !

Hon. Now am I blest, surpassing all Expression ;

I can contentedly my Fate embrace,

By your Example arm'd to stand the Shock

Of Prison, Tortures, nay of Death itself.

Virg. ! Alas *Honest*, Life's a chequer'd Scene,

Compos'd of various Changes. Now perhaps

We are in possession of some Golden Dream,

Some envious Demon frustrates all our Hopes ;

Shews

Shews us the glittering Phantom full in View,
 Then veils the Scene, and leaves delusive Woe
 Wrapt in a Cloud of Misery behind.
 I'll therefore be content, whatever Lot
 The over-ruling Powers above assign.
 Ha! here comes *Claudius*——I'm prepar'd to meet
 The worst that can befall me.

CLAUDIUS enters here.

Claud. Lovely Maid,
 My Orders are from *Appius*, the *Decemvir*,
 To bring you to the *Forum*. 'Tis his Care
 To rule in *Rome* with Justice; you will find
 His Honour is your Safeguard. Think, *Virginia*,
 His Conduct is impartial: Truth alone
 Is all he seeks for, next the Good of *Rome*.
 It is his Power in *Rome* may make you great,
 May make you happy, and advance your Friends.

Virg. My Virtue is all the Happiness I want;
 'Tis all I seek or wish for.

Claud. Gentle Maid,
 I am your Friend; your Virtue is secure
 While in my House: 'Tis prudent to submit
 To publick Justice.

Virg. Yes, I must submit
 When Power impells me; friendless as I am.
 Can you suppose, that *Rome* will tamely bear
 This Tyrant's Sway, or patiently endure
 His impious Pride, his Publick Villanies?
 No, *Claudius*; you will find that some in *Rome*
 Will dare oppose you.

[*Shout without, Liberty! Liberty!*

Claud. Ha! what Shout was that? [*Aside.*
 This Moment you must with me.——Nearer still?

[*Aside.*
 Come, we have no Time to pause, *Virginia*, now:
 Be instant, or else I'll force you. [*Pulls her away.*

Virg. Heaven protect me!

SCENE

SCENE II. *The Street.*

HORATIUS and VALERIUS.

HORATIUS.

THIS far, *Valerius*, see our Cause succeeds.
 They seek for Freedom: To the vulgar Sort
 I've only thrown out general, broken Hints
 For Discontent—there's no Dependence on 'em;
 They are soon warm'd, and cool again as fast;
 For every Breath of adulative Air
 Will waft their Minds to any Point you will.
 Therefore I make their Help indifferent to us——
 The more Delib'rate, I have ply'd with Reasons,
 Have urg'd the Right which every *Roman* has,
 To reassume his ancient native Freedom;
 When Tyrants dare usurp, or wrest it from them.
 These, or such like, are Terms which I have us'd
 With Caution and Reserve——As to my Friends,
 I've been more open with, and ask'd their Counsel,
 To some I've frankly wish'd Assistance of:
Such are fast Friends: and even in all, I find
 A Readiness to aid, and join our Cause.
 And now there's only wanting a stated Time
 To lead them forth, and bravely seek our Freedom.

Val. In all things, good *Horatius*, you have acted
 With prudent Judgment, and deserv'd Applause.
 But where so many are to be concern'd,
 Some Traytor may creep in, and may perhaps
 Through Fear, Ill-Will or Diffidence, betray us.

Hor. Betray us! no: Confusion!——No *Valerius*,
 I cannot think so meanly of myself,
 Of my own Judgment in the Choice of Friends,
 As barely to suspect it.

Val. Excuse my Caution.
 Do they approve the Justice of our Cause?

Or

Or think it sufficient Reason for revolting?
If so, I'm satisfy'd.

Hor. By Heav'n they do!

Is not *Dentatus's* Death alone a Cause?
But join the Usurpation of the Tyrants,
Who hold their Pow'r against the People's Voice:
Have they not broke through all our ancient Laws?
And when we granted them the pompous Title
For *One Year* only, have presum'd to keep it
For Years successive? nay, and claim a Right
To lord it o'er us; to prescribe us Laws,
And pay them Fines, and *Taxes* as they please.
These are the Causes which a *Roman Soul*
Can never stoop to bear with Patience long.

Val. 'Tis *these* that strike at Liberty indeed.
Whate'er we seem in outward Garb, in Mind
We must be sunk in Slaves to bear it tamely.
The *Roman* Courage soon will rouse itself,
Exert its Force, and shew that Souls *born free*
Will ever seek for Freedom.

Hor. That is Nature,
The Force of Reason reigning in our Minds,
Which Tyrants can't subdue——'Tis that alone,
Freely, untaught, will seek to range at large.
And let me say, *Valerius*, *Rome* can boast
Of those who hold that Excellence of Soul
For Noble Ends.

Val. I doubt it not, *Horatius*.
I boast of no superior Strength of Mind;
Nor claim a Freedom more than Nature claims.
But yet I find a Beam of Pleasure rise,
When I with Coolness think what *Freedom* is,
And think and know; 'tis ev'ry *Romans* Right,
A Right which our Forefathers long enjoy'd——
'Tis our Inheritance——'tis *THAT* we seek.

Hor. No more, *Valerius*.——Here comes *Marcus Claudius*,
That cringing, fawning Tool to the Usurper;

The

The Slave to all his Vices—Shall we strike? [*Drawing.*]

Val. 'Twill not be prudent—Hold *Horatius*, now:
He is unworthy of a *Roman's* Thought,
A worthless *Nothing*: Let him drag his Chain.

Enter to them CLAUDIUS.

Claud. *Horatius*!—and *Valerius*!—I have sought
With anxious *Care* your Places of Resort;
But that is recompensed to find you here.

Val. Your Bus'ness, *Claudius*?

Claud. 'Tis to you, *Valerius*.

I come from *Appius*——He has long approv'd
Your manly Virtues, and would now do something
As a Reward for your distinguish'd Merit.

Val. I neither seek for Fame, nor *his* Applause:
I would not bear the *greatest Post* in *Rome*,
To give a Sanction to his Tyranny.——
If I have Virtues, they shall still be such,
Free and Untainted

Claud. You are severe, *Valerius*
In your Reply.——*Horatius*, does my Message
Deserve this Answer?

Hor. No surely, Worthy *Claudius*,
I think he spoke—'too tamely.—*Curse* your Tyrant,
Does he resolve another Sacrifice,
'To appease the injur'd Ghost of brave *Dentatus*?
No! no, thou base, thou hypocritick Slave!
Tell him——

[*Spoken passionately.*]

Claud. Young Man—Justice is in the *Forum*.

Hor. 'Tis false:—She's fled from *Rome*, since the
Decemvirs

Have dar'd to hold their lawless impious Sway.
Where is *Virginia*, Traytor? What's thy Claim?
Thou Monster, Pander, Slave to *Appius'* Lust.

Claud. This Language shall be answer'd; you shall
find
Justice is still in *Rome*.—Here, seize these Traytors.

Ente

Enter a Band of Soldiers ; they fight ; at length, over-power'd by Numbers, Horatius, and Valerius are secured

Bear them to Prison ! 'Tis the just Reward
Of Plots and Treasons 'gainst the Peace of *Rome* :
Their Punishment shall be my Care alone. *[Exit.*

Val. Oh *Rome* ! I mourn for thy approaching
Woes ;

But yet, kind Fate may favour our Design.
From that blest Thought, *Horatius*, I'm prepar'd
To meet the *Tyrant's* Rage. Freedom will rouse
The Citizens of *Rome* to aid our Cause. ———
Come, Soldiers, lead us to our destin'd Place.
Oh may the Gods regard our bleeding Country !

S C E N E III. *The Forum.*

APPIUS as Judge, Senators, &c. CLAUDIUS, VIRGINIA, NUMITORIUS, and Citizens.

CLAUDIUS.

WHILE *Rome*, my Lord, is rul'd by you with
Justice,

I claim the Right which every *Roman* claims,
To open my Complaint and seek Redress.

App. What is your Grievance, *Claudius* ? you shall
find

The injur'd reliev'd, and Innocence protected ;
That is our sole Endeavour, all we wish,
To make *Rome* happy in our Government.

Claud. 'Tis THAT and, Truth, gives Sanction to
my Cause :

Here I am certain of impartial Justice,
When you give Sentence.

Num. Such we also hope :

This Prefacing, and Flattery, now is needless.

App.

App. Come, to the Business, *Claudius*.

Claud. Know, my Lord,

That what I now demand, was mine by Right,
Even sixteen Years ago by th' Laws of *Rome*;
But then was stolen, and since secreted from me:
Truth and Impartial Justice is my Witness,
I only seek what Laws inviolate
Have made my Right——

App. —— Explain the Business, *Claudius*.

Claud. The Laws of *Rome*, my Lord, have so decreed,

That all who are born of Slaves, of Right belong
To the Slave's Master: Such was *yonder Maid*,
Born of my Slave, and stolen at my Birth,
And sold to *Numitoria*, Wife to *Virginus*.
She had been barren, and to raise her Credit
Amongst her Friends, finds out this Slave of mine,
Gave out she was with Child, and when this Maid
Was newly born, the Nurse attending sold it,
Feigning to me, it perish'd in the Birth.

Num. Just Heav'n! what monstrous Wickedness is this!

[*Aside.*

This Circumstance, my Lord, I know is False.
My Sister oft had Children, though not one
Did long survive their Birth; and this all those
Who knew *Virginus* then, know it is true.
This young unhappy Maid, I've often seen
Hang on my Sister's Breast; with Eagerness
Devouring (as it were) the flowing Milk.
Be Heav'n my Witness, there are many here,
Who have seen and know the same, were at her Birth,
And in my Sister's House: How can this Tale
In any Part seem plausible?

Claud. Yes, my Lord,

No doubt there are enough to testify
What he reports; the Honour of their House
Is built upon it.——I, my Lord, with Truth
Still urge my Suit.——*Cornelia* here, my Niece,
Was hir'd by *Numitoria* to seduce

The

The Slave to sell it: Here she stands, my Lord,
To answer that.

App. And is this Truth, *Cornelia*?

Corn. Indeed, my Lord, 'tis true—Forgive me, Sir,
But I've had Woe enough already for it;
For ever since the Fatal Hour I brought
The Child to *Numitoria*, I have pin'd
In Restlessness and Grief; Remorse of Conscience
For so unjust an Action, hung upon me;
Nor had I ever scarce a Moment's Rest,
'Till I had told my sad Offence to *Claudius*.
My Freedom at his House, afforded me
The Means more safely to commit the Crime.

App. And are you sure, that Maid *Virginia*, there,
Is the same Child you carried? ———

Corn. Yes, my Lord,
I frequently have seen her, scarce miss'd a Day;
For still the Guilt hung heavy on my Mind.
When *Numitoria* told me her Misfortune,
She said, her greatest Curse was to be Barren,
Bid me seek out some Slave and buy a Child,
To keep her Reputation 'mongst our Sex:
I did,—and what ensued, you've heard the Truth.

Num. This is some damn'd Contrivance of the
Tyrant,

To get *Virginia* into his Possession: [*Aside.*]

App. Well, you claim a Title to *Virginia*,
What would you urge, what say in her Behalf?
I only sit to deal impartial Justice:
'Tis what the Free born Sons of *Rome* will claim,
And is their due;—I know of no Distinction;
For even the meanest Peasant has a Right
To seek for Justice, equal with a *Consul*:
Therefore I think that *Claudius*'s Demand
Is fair and legal; ——— but if you disprove
What they assert, ——— I seek for Truth alone,
'Tis *that* shall sway my Judgment and my Sentence.

Num.

Num. My Lord, this sudden, this unheard-of Claim,
Makes us unfit to answer his Assertions.

Claud. My Lord, I seek for Justice; here I hope
I shall not sue in vain

Ici. You shall not, *Claudius.*

Then know, that yonder Maid who is call'd *Virginia*,
By Right of *Roman* Laws belongs to *Claudius*;
Therefore to him again must be restor'd.

Num. My Lord, she cannot;——I demand a
Respite

Of this your Sentence, till her Father comes
To plead his Right: And I by *Roman* Laws
Claim the Protection of her, 'till he prove
A better Title to her——

Omn. Send for her Father.

App. It must be as I've sentenc'd; you do wrong
To put it off; I cannot grant you Time,
Where Right undoubted is by Witnesses prov'd.
Let *Claudius* be her Safe-guard.

Num. I refuse;

His Right is still disputed and deny'd;
I must, my Lord, require it at your Hands,
My Life shall answer for her being here
To morrow early.——For these Dregs of Life
I'll here lay down, e're she shall go to *Claudius*,
Until a clearer Right is prov'd by him,
And by a legal Tryal.

App. Let it be so——

Claudius, I must submit,——to let it be
As *Numitorius* asks: Forbid it Heav'n,
That I should act in Dissonance to Reason,
Or to impartial Justice; still let those
Direct my Sentence: It is Truth alone
I seek to guide me, and I am content
It shall be so——But you remember, Sir,
Your Life for her Appearance.

Num. Yes, my Lord,
With Life and Fortune, that shall be my Care.

App.

App. Then fail not at your Peril, I expect it.
Romans, we adjourn the Assembly 'till to-morrow.
 [*Appius comes forward.*—*The back Scene closes*
and leaves him alone.]

S C E N E IV.

MY Hopes are frustrated, and my Intentions
 Must not be publick—Force must not be us'd.
 The present Discontent, and growing Factions
 Among the People, curb me into Silence.
 I know I'm hated by the Multitude—
 Should I attempt by Force to gain my Ends?
 No, that were Madness—'tis Dissimulation,
 And Shew of Virtue, that must blind the Vulgar,
 From penetrating into my Designs.—
Claudius, that Engine of my Policy,
 Has play'd his Part, a fawning, cringing Tool—
 Such Slaves, whom every Knave in Pow'r can use:
 Their Drudgery done, they're thrown neglected by;
 And yet we stoop to use them, seem well pleas'd,
 Applaud their fore'd Hypocrisy, and smile,
 Then stoop so low, to use the same Disguise,
 And ask their Briendship.—To my Wish he comes

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Well, *Claudius*; I must now prevent this Man,
Virginia's Father, from appearing here;
 All Hopes are lost if we should suffer that:
 I'll instant Orders to the Generals send,
 Strictly forbidding him, on Pain of Death,
 To leave the Camp.—

Claud. My Lord, the only Way
 You can propose to favour your Design;
 I do not doubt Success, already that
 Has partly crown'd my Hopes; *Valerius* now,
 And that seditious Traytor to the State,
Horatius, are secure in my Possession.

App.

App. Instant Death prepare : Let it be secret,
The Villains Friends perhaps may be alarm'd,
And raise the Tumult ; first send Messengers
To the *Decemvirs*, then dispatch these Rebels.
Claudius, farewell, and may Success attend you:

[*Exit Claud.*

Such are the Instruments which wise Men use
To model their Designs ; and he perhaps
Has those who have less Abilities than him
That are his Tools : But by such Means as these,
Up th' Ascent, the Ambitious rise to Greatness ;
There will my Soul in spite of Reason soar,
Nor will I disobey that noble Call ;
I'll reach the Summit, or will bravely fall.

End of the THIRD ACT.



C

ACT

A Prison, dark.

HORATIUS *and* VALERIUS *in Chains.*

VALERIUS.

STILL penfive! Good *Horatius*——— why this
Gloom,
This filent Pause? Come —— Sink not in a
Slave;

I am a *Roman* still : The Tyrant's Chains,
These cumbrous Manacles, altho' my Limbs
Feel their oppressive Weight, my free-born Soul
Has no perception of them. Come, *Horatius*,
Big with some future Good, my labouring Breast
Beats an Alarm to Liberty and Fame
Our stedfast Friends, all *Rome*, impatient wait
The Issue of this great, important Night ;
Should you be wanting of your chearful Mind,
Perhaps even *that* may blast my blooming Hopes.

Hor. Oh my *Valerius*! 'tis my steadfast Wish
To aid the Cause; 'tis every *Roman's* Right
To seek for Freedom. Nature points a Path,
But where are Hopes? What single Circumstance
Can give us that?—We are in the Tyrant's Power,
Confined and helpless,—not a Friend to aid
Or join us here,— and bound like common Slaves,
What Gleam of Light athwart the solemn Gloom
Is this way darting its auspicious Ray?—
Ha! Heav'n forbid—Confusion! it is *Claudius*
With Instruments of Death—that is our Lot.

Val. I am prepar'd, and glory in our Cause;
A Cause, which ever will be great in Fame,

And

And dear to every Breast with Freedom warm'd:
Furies shal lash me, e're my destin'd Soul
Shall catch a Meanness or Dissimulation,
To extenuate *our* Designs, or ask for Life.

[*Scene closes.*

S C E N E II.

Enter Claudius, with four Ruffians at a Distance disguised.

C L A U D I U S

NATURE shrinks back and starts at my Design,
Nor have I ever known such Fears before.
Death, in a thousand Forms and Ways I've seen,
Without the least Concern, or Pity in me:
But now, there's something, some unusual Dread,
Something reluctant hangs about my Heart.—
The solemn Darkness of this awful Cell
Strikes on my Mind—Be still, my Coward Soul,
And let Humanity be laid aside,
And glory in the Deed.—Why shrink you thus?

1st. *Ruf.* You must mistake our Courage and our
Zeal;

If you command, our dearest Friends shall fall.
The Infant smiling at the Mother's Breast,
Should meet with no Compassion; *none* from us,
Were even our Fathers destin'd to *your* Rage.
Not all their hoary Hairs should stop their Fate;
Such is our Duty,—such our sense of Fear.

[*Scene draws open again.*

Claud. Stand fast, my Friends dispatch them instantly;

Be steadfast to your Trust, nor let their Cries,
Or their Intreaties, stop the purpos'd Deed.

Ruf. goes toward them.] Claudius, enough—Vatinius and Horatius,

We are the Instruments which Rome has chose,

To rid the World of Traytors — 'Tis your Crimes,
Your publick Crimes, and Treasons in the State,
That draws this Justice on you. — Strike the Blow.

[To the Slaves.

*Here Valerius and Horatius wrest the Swords from
the two foremost, and kill them, and wound the
other two, who with Claudius escape.*

Val. Stand off, vile Slaves, and come not near my
Person,

I am too sacred for your impious Hands.

Meet this—and think the Gods inspire my Breast—

'Tis Liberty ; and thus—I force my Way.

*At this instant the Citizens, headed by Icilius,
break into the Prison, and set Valerius and Ho-
ratius at liberty.*

S C E N E III.

I C I L I U S.

HOW is this Change? ——— Ha! who are those,
Horatius?

Hor. Those, and your present Aid, the bounteous
Gods

Have destin'd for our Good.—These grov'ling Slaves
That Monster *Claudius* to dispatch us sent :

Aim'd at each Bosom was the pointed Sword,
'To Strike the fatal Blow——But Self-defence,

Nature's unerring Law, new Vigour gave ;
And from their cruel Hands the Weapons forc'd,

We plung'd into their Hearts—Two more advanc'd,
Attempting still our Lives, and those the Gods

Had destin'd likewise to these Villains Fate :

But as you came, precipitate they turn'd,

And have receiv'd an Earnest of their Death.

Ici. *Horatius*, your Report has fill'd my Soul

With Horror and Surprize ; and shall we now

Be idle Neuters to our Country's Fate?

Now is the Time to strike for Liberty.

These

These honest Citizens have join'd our Cause,
And bravely forc'd their Way thro' thick'ning Ranks;
The Streets were fill'd with free born Sons of *Rome*,
Resolv'd your Rescue, or the Tyrant's Blood.
Appius at first oppos'd, with force of Arms,
To hinder our Design: Our gathering Friends
He found, at length unable to restrain,
Then sent a Message, promis'd your Release
If we'd disperse——But that was still delay'd——
At last it was resolv'd to force our Way——
We did——and thus in happy Hour we came
To your Relief.

Val. Is there a Dawn of Hope
For Liberty in *Rome*?——Let us improve
The happy Moment; bravely fall forth
And strike at once for Freedom or for Death.

Hor. Come, noble *Romans*, free yourselves from
Chains,
From cruel Tyrants; who have made you Slaves
To their ambitious, boundless, lawless Sway.
Exert your selves, and shew you still can boast
A Claim to Freedom.

Icil. 'Tis a Glorious Claim:
And you shall find, *Horatius*, that my Pow'r
Shall be exerted for the publick Good.
But, oh! indulge a Moment's Absence to me:
It is the last, perhaps the *only* Bliss,
A faithful Lover craves; and may be too
The last for ever——

Hor. What would *Icilius* say?
Will you shrink back, and now desert our Cause?
For on *this* Hour depends the Fate of *Rome*:
Our Lives, our Laws, our Liberty's at stake.
Let me not now accuse that noble Worth,
Which once distinguish'd you above Mankind.
If you should go, the babling Tongue of *Fame*
Perhaps may say, in lazy Indolence
You, unconcern'd, a faithless Neuter sat,
With-held by Fear, to seek your Country's Good.

Oh! think what Glory will attend this Deed,
In future Times recorded to our Fame,
To shake these haughty Tyrants Fetters off,
And at one Blow restore to *Rome* her Freedom.

Icil. *Horatius*, you have touch'd my tender Part :
Now Love and Fame alternate rule my Soul.
Forgive this Weakness—but you still shall find
Icilius faithful—Sooner think the Sun
Will cease to send us his benignant Light,
Or, back receding from his usual Course
To distant Regions of eternal Space,
For ever lost, or hid from Human Eye :
Think *this* will be, and *Chaos* come again,
Sooner than think *Icilius* can desert you.
But should that virtuous Maid become a Prey
To the Usurper's Will—Oh! I shall rage,
Fury and Madness rise upon my Soul :
I fear I can't contain my self with Reason.
What must be done—to disappoint the Villain?

Hor. I would advise a Calmness in your Temper,
Propose her Rescue; mention nothing else,
Unless to such whom you can safely trust :
Then, at a Signal, we will sally forth.
The proud and daring Tyrant soon shall know,
Tho' we were Slaves, they can't subdue the Mind.
That glorious Happiness we yet can claim;
Virtue is still our Care.—Come, Friends to *Rome*,
We hope our Fame and Freedom are not lost. [Ex.

S C E N E IV.

A P P I U S alone.

WHY are we plac'd above the giddy Vulgar?
Why thus distinguish'd by superior Pow'r?
Fix'd on this Eminence, tho' Eagle-like
We mount, enjoy the Sun, and gaze upon it,
And fondly play in its refulgent Beams,
Yet with its dazzling Lustre we're betray'd;

Down

Down the vast Precipice, with rapid Pace,
We fall unpitv'd——That's the Curse of Pride,
Of wild Ambition; thus to soar so high.——
The meanest Slave about me knows more Peace
Than I, and more Tranquility of Mind.——
Yet 'tis their Wretchedness of Soul that makes them,
They are as familiar with their grov'ling State,
As I am with Dominion——and 'tis now
Too late to think upon a mean Retreat——
That is a Poorness, Abjectness of Soul,
I'll ne'er betray——No, I'll pursue the Path
That leads to Pleasure, and ambitious Greatness.
My Pow'r in *Rome* will still keep up the Claim
To young *Virginia*——Firm my Sentence stands.
Her Father, by my Order, is detain'd;
Her Uncle for his Safety will resign her;
A Shew of Justice gilds the out-side Form,
And who can dare appeal to what's decreed?
What of that beardless Stripling, young *Icilius*?
To cut off doubt,——Yes, *Claudius* shall perform it,
Here to my Wish.

Claud. My Lord, may I presume
To intrude a Moment on your better Thoughts?
Importance urges.

App. You are welcome, *Claudius*.
What is th' Affair?

Claud. *Icilius* ——

App. What of him? [Starting.
Am I betray'd? is dear *Virginia* safe?

Claud. No doubt, my Lord, her Uncle's Life's her
Surety.

But one Misfortune crowds upon another;
Horatius and *Valerius*, are escap'd.
That Traytor, young *Icilius*, with the Tumult,
Forc'd ope the Doors, and rescu'd them from Fate.
Through the enrag'd Herd, my vengeful Arm
Destructive rang'd, 'till Force superior rose,
And, in retreating, I've receiv'd a Wound

I fear is dangerous : With the gathering Tumult
They seek, they say, for Freedom and Revenge.

App. Confusion ! *Claudius*, what is to be done ?
Bid a *Centurion* lead my *Lictors* on,
Keep a strict Guard through all the Streets of *Rome* :
I'll still maintain that Claim you've made, by Force,
And justify my Sentence.

Claud. I'm so weak,
I fear, I can't attend to urge my Suit,
And what I have attested.

App. 'Twere better not ;
I have my Reasons ; for it will enforce
A stronger Claim perhaps than you imagine,
Beyond their Power to wave ;——your adverse Fate
Shall be the Basis to a new Demand.
I'm satisfy'd with this——Go instant home,
Retire——give out, *Icilius*, fill'd with Rage,
Heading a Band of Ruffians, set upon you
With an intent to murder ;——that your Wounds
Are past all hopes of Cure.

Claud. My Lord, I will.

App. Be secret, *Claudius*——I'll attend the *Forum*
As I've appointed——safely guarded too,
Lest the Seditious sow Contention there.
Perhaps the tim'rous Eye of Pity may
Supplant my Hopes, and catch the gazing Crowd ;
And if I fail in this, all *Rome* shall tremble ;
My Purpose is decreed, and fix'd as Fate.

S C E N E V.

ICILIUS and VIRGINIA.

ICILIUS.

WHAT is this brittle Frame of Nature, Life,
That thus we seek to covet and preserve it ?
'Tis varied as the changing Seasons are ;
The greatest Part in Trifles, Care and Pain,
Insensibly is lost ;——the rest is Sleep,

Void

Void of Perception; and the checquer'd Scene
Of half our Life is spent, before you know
The Relish of Enjoyment; and even then,
When blooming Pleasure, and gay Sun-shine shews
The sweet delusive Dream, some gathering Clouds
And raising Winds collect their raging Force,
In Torrents down the black'ning Storm descends.
So, my *Virginia*, I had treasur'd up
Ten thousand future Joys, to meet in you,
To charm and bless us both; but now those Hopes
The threat'ning Storms defeat; and yet some change
The bounteous Gods may send, to disappoint
The Villains Purposes, and make us happy.

Virg. I, for my Part, am ready to give up
A Life, which lately has been Grief to bear;
But yet in virtue still I'll seek Repose;
That is beyond his reach.

Ici. Let Virtue still
Direct your Conduct; do not yet despair,
Horatius and *Valerius* are my Friends:
Rome shall yet find, that Virtue is their Care,
In spite of Tyrants.

Virg. Be not rash, *ICILIUS*,
Nor seek by Danger to preserve a Life
Not worth your saving at so great a Hazard:
The Tyrant has Command and Power in *Rome*,
To interpose and frustrate your Designs.

Ici. By Heav'n he has not—first the Traytor's
Heart
Shall meet my Vengeance: *Rome* shall find, we dare
With open Arms demand of him our Freedom.

Vir. Leave that to Fate,—may *Jove* propitious keep
My Virtue and my Innocence secure.

Ici. Oh, my *Virginia*! I shall rave with Madness,
Grow desperate in Revenge, should I suspect
The Villain dar'd attempt it—No; Confusion!
E're that should happen (O! forgive the Thought!)
This Hand should act a friendly Part to both,

For I could Glory in the generous Deed,
And fall with you.

Virg. Oh I fear not me, *Icilius*;
When Honour asks the Deed, I can perform it.
'Tis neither Pain, nor fear should stop my Hand;
'Tis but a Moment's Struggle, and we end.

Ici. Nobly resolv'd!

Virg. Yes, 'tis resolv'd, bless'd Youth,
That is the least I fear. You may survive,
And meet another Maid to make you happy,
I shall not envy you a fancy'd Bliss;
Think only, that *Virginia* lov'd you too.

Ici. May Heav'n in Cataracts pour down its
Woes

On my devoted Head, if e'er I live
A Moment longer than to have Revenge;
I'll gladly seek my Death, when that is full.

Virg. I seek it now, and nothing should prevent it,
But that my Uncle's Life is bound for mine,
I live for that alone,——unless the Gods
Have destin'd you and Freedom to these Arms:

Ic. Embracing.] Now I'm satisfy'd——Oh, my
Virginia!

Ten thousand deep Disquietudes perplex'd me,
To think the Event of our uncertain State;
But that is over,—your Heroick Soul
Has set aside those Scruples.—You'll forgive me,
Excess of Fondness hurry'd on my Thoughts,
Perhaps too far. For if your Father's Presence
Has no Effect, we force you from the Tyrant;
If that should fail, my Doubts are now clear'd up,
Your Resolution fortifies my Soul
Against all Dangers: But all *Rome*, shall find
That Day, a Day of Blood and of Revenge.
The Soul that dares usurp a Tyrant Form,
In every future Age shall Tremble at it——
But now Necessity requires our parting,
Virginia! 'tis our destin'd Lot——Farewel.

Virg.

Virg. I am prepar'd to meet a thousand Dangers,
To suffer all Things: But this sudden Shock
Of parting thus, that fatal Word—farewel,
Sinks in my Heart—perhaps it is for ever.

Ici. Now 'tis past,—you will forgive these Tears,
The Over-flowings of a tender Heart,
Doubtful and apprehensive of your Danger:
But I should risque your Safety, should I stay
Here in these faithful Arms——

Virg. A Moment longer,
Each Moment now, is worth an age that's past;
I never knew the Value of wing'd Time
'Till this unhappy Hour.

Ici. Be Witness, Heav'n,
I would not leave you thus, but Fate ordains it,
Our Friends are now assembled, and expect
My instant Aid—Thou lovely virtuous Maid,
Once more——farewel. [Exit.

Vir. Oh! this is worse than Death,
This is a parting will increase my Woe.
Good Heav'n! for what new Grievs am I design'd?
I've something here about me bears me down,
A fluttering Weight oppressive at my Heart.

[Weeps.

S C E N E VI.

NUMITORIUS and VIRGINIA.

NUMITORIUS.

COME, my *Virginia*, stop these plaintive Sighs,
Draw near and sit thee down, 'tis vain to grieve.
'Tis the Disease, the Lot of human Frailty,
Of all who breathe to meet and feel Misfortune.
The proudest Monarch down to the meanest Slave,
In every Age, and every Clime have born it,
Tho' not alike—yet all in some Degree.

And

And yours and mine, perhaps, are not the Worst:
Let that suffice.

Virg. Uncle, I am resign'd
To what the Gods have destin'd me to suffer:
For I was taught to bear Affliction's Weight
In all its Rigour—when the Fates decreed
My Mother's Death.

Num. 'Twas then indeed, *Virginia*,
You had a Cause; yet 'tis the common Lot
Of every Being, every other Mortal,
There's no Distinction—yours and mine alike.
From the first Moment of our Birth, till now,
We are only hast'ning to our Journey's End,
The Evening of our Days—tho' mine by Nature
Will first be clos'd—The wasted Flame decays,
And the dim Curtain of the Night hangs ready
To drop between me and another State.

Virg. Oh Sir! I hope the Gods will still preserve
you

A Happiness to *Rome* and all your Friends,
But more to me. You have with tender Care
Been ev'ry Blessing which I could have wish'd,
Except a Mother.

Num. That was still my Duty;
Nature requir'd it of me.—But, *Virginia*,
'There's still a stronger Tye of my Affection
To be perform'd:

Virg. You have already done,
What even the utmost Stretch of Tendernefs
Could wish perform'd.—your Life's already bound
And link'd in mine—Oh that my Father's Presence
Would break that Bond!—Suppose the Tyrant should
By some foul Means attempt to force me from you:
He would deny the Deed, and might demand
Your Life and Fortune.

Num. Now attend *Virginia*;
I have waited this Opinion from yourself,
The more to urge it—'Tis the Villain's Purpose,
Perhaps,

Perhaps, to do it.—Your Father's long Delay
Makes me suspect some foul Design on foot,
To hinder him from coming :—But of that
No matter now : My present Purpose leads
To your immediate Safety—which, in brief,
I thus resolve to enterprize.

Virg. How, Sir ?

Num. Consider, Child, you are young, and yet may
live

To enjoy a Life as happy as you wish.

Icilius loves you ; your Father has betroth'd you
With Prudence to him ; he has many Friends
Who seek your Welfare—I have sent for him
To take you now immediately from *Rome*
To his paternal Seat—Nay, look not thus—

[*Rising hastily.*

Virg. By Heav'n he shall not : what would you with
me, Sir ?

Can you suppose so meanly of my Virtue,
Or of that Blood deriv'd from *Numitoria* ?

Num. Patience, *Virginia* : Good *Honestia* will
Attend you with him, 'till the Storm is over :
You will be far from Danger there ; resolve
To save your self.

Virg. Perish *Virginia* first
With blackest Horror. What ! leave my Uncle's Life
A Pledge for mine, and poorly seek for Safety ?—
That Curse shall never fall on me alone.

Num. With Moderation, Child—Sit down again,
Let me entreat your Patience—Well, *Virginia*,
Think with what tender Fondness, what Affection,
Your Father loves you, and *Icilius* too.
Think, if the Tyrant gain his impious Purpose,
In what a horrid Scene of Grief and Woe
You must involve them both !—Your Father's Age
Will render him incapable to bear it :
And for *Icilius*—Revenge will instant follow,
In which the Lives of him and all his Friends
Will be engag'd. What Slaughter will ensue,

Heav'n

Heav'n only knows: Perhaps the Blood of thousands
 And Infants yet unborn, may curse the Day
 And curse *Virginia* too, the fatal Cause
 Of all their Evils.—Think of this, and save
 Your helpless Father, your dejected Friends;
 But above all, *Virginia*, save Yourself.

Virg. That is my least Concern — What must you think,

For me to leave you here a Prey to *Appius*,
 Your Life and Fortune both within his Pow'r,
 Nay, and your Honour forfeited to him?
 What will Mankind, who read the unhappy Page,
 Say of me then? They'll curse my treach'rous Soul.
 My Innocence, my Fame were lost for ever,
 Should I consent to that.

Num. Believe it not.

I'm now upon the very Verge of Life,
 And but a few remaining weary Days
 To linger on; for Life is grown a Burthen,
 With Pains, Diseases, and a thousand Ills,
 The Lot of Age. I therefore chuse to quit
 The troubled Stage; 'tis the last Scene I have
 To act my Part, and make my Exit happy.

Virg. I'll ne'er consent, the Event be as it will.

[*knocking without.*

Num. It must be, Child—Ha! here *Icilius* comes!
 Now 'tis too late to think of a Retreat.

Virg. I am determin'd, Sir, Oh! do not——

[*Enter Servant.*

Ser. Sir, *Virginus* is——

Num. Both rising hastily.] *Virginus*! What of him?

Ser. Return'd to *Rome*, and waits impatient for you
 At his own House, desires you and *Virginia*
 Immediate there. [Exit.

Num. I thank the Righteous Gods.

Virg. Oh Uncle! this blest News revives my
 Soul.

Num. My dear *Virginia*! What amazing Good-
 ness

Has

Has Heav'n reserv'd for your superior Virtue !
A Dawn of Providence beams in upon us,
And warms my Hope : Oh ! let us fly to meet him.
Propitious *Jove*, indulge my ardent Pray'r,
Be truth and Innocence like hers your Care.

End of the FOURTH ACT.



A C T

A C T V. S C E N E I.

VIRGINIUS *alone.*

ONE only Child to bless my hoary Hairs,
 To be by Force, by Villains taken from me !
 Why have I liv'd to see this fatal Day ?
Rome rul'd by Tyrants, and their impious Power
 To fall on my Head ! Is this the destin'd Lot
 For all my Service ? *This* the last Reward
 Which they intend me ? Just Heav'n, I ask your Pity,
 Oh ! give me strength to bear this Load of Evil.
 Have I gone through the dangerous Toil in War,
 The Rage and Fury of the Martial Field,
 Been great in Arms, to fall at last in *Rome*
 By *Roman* Hands ? — Nor yet on me alone
 The Weight must lye, the Innocent are joyn'd
 To glut their Crimes — Yet still I may prevent it.
 No ; have I liv'd till now a tender Parent ?
 Shall I pollute these Hands with filial Blood
 In these last Moments ? Oh ! 'tis a cruel Thought !
That, or resign her tamely to his Lust,
 To brand my Name with Infamy for ever,
 Must be the Event. Oh ! what alternate Passions
 Rise in my Breast, with Fury each contending !
 Dreadful conflict ! — Yes — be that my Choice ;
 Virtue and Innocence in other Worlds,
 May meet a better Fate. — Ha ! here she comes,
 Now be the *Roman*, and preserve her Fame.
 In every distant Age, the admiring World
 May learn from me, that Virtue's worth their Care.

S C E N E II.

VIRGINIUS, VIRGINIA, NUMITORIUS, HORAT-
 TIUS, and Romans following.

WHY gaze you thus on the Unfortunate ?
 Is it our Lot alone to be distinguish'd

From

From all the rest of *Rome* with Ills. superior?
It may, perhaps, be your unhappy Fate
To fill the Number of these Tyrants Crimes:
E're it be long, your Daughters may be forc'd
And taken from you, or your Sisters Virtue
Be ever in their Power—Can you with Patience
Gaze thus upon us, and not be concern'd?
Is there among you, who can tamely bear
These Tyrants Chains, sink into Slavery,
And call himself a *Roman*? Oh, kind Heav'n,
Let me not poorly bend beneath this Weight!

Hon. Virginius, I am a *Roman*, and in *Rome*
Can boast that Claim, I seek for Liberty.

Virg. Oh good *Horatius*! this unhappy Maid,
Spotless and innocent, is doom'd to suffer.
See with an Eye of Pity; think me your Father
Leading your Sister as a Sacrifice
To some curst Tyrant.—Oh! *Horatius*, think
What would be his Concern, then think mine equal
Could I—but Honour, Friendship, Ties of Blood,
Forbid that Thought. My Brother *Numitorius*,
His Life, his Fortune bound for her Appearance.
Oh, *Horatius*!——

Hor. Rouse up your *Roman* Courage,
'Tis still your Friends Regard to seek your Welfare.
Valerius and *Icilius*—— [*Virginia faints.*

Virg. —Ha! my Daughter,
She faints, *Horatius*——Oh, look up, *Virginia*!
Your Friends will guard you from the Tyrant's Power.

Virg. Oh, help *Icilius*! Father, Friends, assist me.
Where would this Monster force me?

Virg. Here are none
But those who seek your Welfare: Come, *Virginia*,
Look up—speak to me Child,—your Father speaks:

Virg. May Heav'n protect you—Now the Conflict's
over,
I'm ready to attend you.

Hor. Good *Virginia*,
Bear it with Calmness; you will find us ready
To aid your Cause.

Virg.

Virg. Whatever be my Lot
I'll suffer patiently.

Virgi. Remember *Romans*,
Whate'er the Gods have destin'd for us here,
Is for our good—Hereafter, we may find
A happier Climate, and a just Reward
For suffering Virtue, Innocence and Truth.

S C E N E III.

APPIUS. (*alone*) *Pompously array'd.*
HER Father is return'd, and *Rome* in Arms,
And the rebellious Sons of Tumult cry
For Liberty and Freedom—Dangerous Hour
To sooth my Passions in! This seldom Form
Of legal Tryal, screens me from their Rage:
My armed *Lictors* too secure my Person.
The ill Success of *Claudius* gilds my Hopes,
And who will dare resist my Power in *Rome*?
The worthless Rabble Tumult I despise
With Scorn indignant; and this outward Shew,
This borrow'd Majesty, shall make the Traytors
Tamely resign her. 'Tis the Hour of Tryal,
And in this Robe, this Pageantry of State,
I'll persevere, and still enforce the Claim.
Superior Force oppos'd shall prove the Right,
And stubborn *Rome* shall bend beneath my Yoke.

S C E N E IV. *The Forum.*

APPIUS, *sitting as Judge*; VIRGINIUS, VIRGINIA,
HORATIUS, VALERIUS, &c.

APPIUS:

ATtend, ye *Romans*; let the Good of *Rome*
Be my first Care: Justice is what I seek,
Is what shall be impartially bestow'd,
While *Appius* sits *Decemvir*. Friends of *Virginia*,
Before I enter on the Legal Right

Which

Which *Claudius* claims to her, as his just Due,
I do accuse you of intended Treason.

Icilius, whom you have betrothed her to,
No doubt assisted by you, has attempted
Last Night to take my Life, and for that Reason
I came thus guarded : He rang'd about the City
Heading a Tumult, who in Fury met
Unhappy *Claudius* : strait their Swords were drawn,
Fell on the unguarded Man, and, wounding him,
Left him for dead——— [*Aside.*

Hor. Curse on the Villain's Heart !
Damn'd Hypocrite.

App. At me perhaps their Vengeance
May next be levell'd ; 'tis the certain Lot
Of all who rule and wish for Peace in *Rome*,
To meet the Envy of aspiring Minds.
Where is *Icilius*, that seditious Rebel ?

Virgi. To whom, my Lord ?—I am not privy to it ?
To no foul Crime, to no Offence committed,
I'm innocent of *Claudius* being hurt.

App. Perhaps you are—this Villainy was done,
To hinder him from coming to the *Forum*
To prove his Title——— [*Aside.*

Hor. Gods ! can I bear this long ?
I shall grow desp'rate

App. —I have heard the Truth,
And am well satisfy'd 'twas his Design,
Therefore I will have Justice—'Tis decreed,
Virginia must be now restor'd to *Claudius*.

Virgi. Patience, my Lord, I ask for Justice too.
Is it not strange, that this Impostor should
Be so profoundly silent, sixteen Years,
And not declare his false Pretensions sooner ?

App. This long Forbearance argues no less Right.
Justice shall still take Place—for I have long
Been privy to your Fraud—for *Claudius*' Father
Did at his Death appoint me his Son's Guardian.
I soon was made acquainted with his Claim,
And that this Slave was Part of the Succession,
Due to my Client—But domestick Fends

Prevented

Prevented me from taking that due Care
Of private Business, though it was my Duty.
But now, the Post I am in will not allow
That I refuse that Justice due to all,
Who seek it here.

Virgi. With Humbleness I ask it,
If I am thus unhappy, thus deceiv'd,
Allow me but to talk a while in private,
And with her Nurse, that so I may discover
Some token of the Imposture, or at least
Be better satisfy'd that I've detain'd
Another's Right, and that I'm not her Father,
Then to the Camp I shall less griev'd return.

App. What Reason will indulge, I'll ready grant,
But from the *Forum* you must not remove.

Virgi. I must submit—Come, my *Virginia* (Still
That Name is dear, and ever will be to me)
Let me dry up those Tears, at least let mine
In Pity mingle with them.

Virg. Oh my Father!
Strike *here* for Virtue, if you would preserve it;
And *there* for Liberty — [Pointing to Appius,
I know my Fate,

If I survive this Hour—But I'm a *Roman*,
And would die like one; die with my Innocence,
My Fame unsully'd.—Father, why gaze you thus?

Virgi. Oh thou Divinity! Thou spotless Goodness!
Shall I who gave Existence to her—Heav'ns!
Shall I alone be guilty of this Crime? [Aside.
Go to the Tyrant, suppliant on thy Knees,
And sue for Mercy.—But no Mercy is there.—
Some ravenous Tiger, or more savage Beast,
Foster'd *that* Monster.

Virg. Give me the Dagger, Sir,
I will assist your Arm, and force the Point
Where you direct it.—You, who gave me Being,
Alone have Right, next the immortal Gods,
To take it from me.

Virgi. This Conflict is too great:
Once more, *Virginia*, let my feeble Arms

Enfold

Enfold you here.—'Tis the last Bliss I seek.——

Forgive me, righteous Gods, if I do err

In my intended Deed,—it is for Virtue's sake,

And if it be a Crime, my Heart is not my Accuser.

To its pure native Clime, the Abode of Gods,

The spotless Innocent shall rise with Joy,

There in the happy Regions of the Just,

The Soul will live, unknowing Grief or Pain,

'Tis the Reward for Virtue, and for you.——

Know, Tyrant, that I did not educate (To Appius.

My dear unhappy Daughter, to become

A Prostitute: I gave her to *Icilius*,

With all her innocent unspotted Virtue,

Can you imagine, *Rome* will ever suffer

Their Wives and Daughters to be taken from them,

To gratify a Tyrant's lewd Desires?

App. Confusion! Curses on my adverse Stars! [*Aside.*

Virgi. Hear me, *Virginia*, spotless, virtuous Maid;

This is the only way to save your Honour;

The last unhappy Conflict of a Father:

This is the Path to Liberty and Fame. [*Stabs her.*

There, Tyrant, with my Curses, and this Blood

Of injur'd Virtue, to the infernal Gods

Thy impious Soul I now devote. [*They attempt to seize him; but he forces his Way through the Lictors.*

App. Secure him,

Let not the sacrilegious Monster pass.

Ha! Escap'd!—Treason! Ye Cowards there,

We are unsafe in *Rome*; Justice indeed

Has fled the abandon'd *Forum*! even here

They publickly commit their horrid Crimes.

Guards, seize those Traytors; that *Horatius* there.

Hor. Tyrant, you dare not;—we defy your Power.

See there the unhappy Victim to your Lust;

Cruel Necessity oblig'd her Father

To save her Virtue from your impious Hands.

App. Patience, ye Gods! Shall I thus tamely bear
Your daring Menaces?

Num. Yes, thou Usurper,

Thou

Thou proud, damn'd Tyrant, to your suffering Country,
Meet this Reward.

[*They fight, and Appius and his Lictors are driven off.*]

Hor. Freedom and Liberty :

Romans, who seek for Freedom, find *Icilius*,

Tell him, we wait his Presence in the *Forum*.

Num. Unhappy Youth ! See him with Swiftneſs
come ;

He has already heard *Virginia's* Fate.

Enter Icilius and Valerius.

Ici. *Horatius* ! Friend to Virtue, where's *Virginia* ?

[*Starting.*]

Hor. Come, good *Icilius*, look upon your Friends ;
It is *Horatius*.

Ici. Curse the unhappy Hour

That I had Birth.—Where was this friendly Arm

To shield her from her cruel Father's Rage ?

Oh why, *Horatius*, had you not stept between them,

Forc'd from his Hand the uplifted fatal Sword,

And sav'd *Virginia* ? You too tamely stood.

Gods, have I Patience, thus to gaze upon her ?

Oh, hapless Maid !—Here will I fix my last.

Val. Come, brave *Icilius*, what the Gods decree

We can't reverse : It is the Hand of Fate.

Now let Revenge and Liberty inspire

Your nobler Part, and seek your Country's Freedom.

Ici. Yes, good *Valerius*, I will seek Revenge.

Be witness, Heav'ns, if there is left in *Rome*

A Soul that dare not curse these Tyrants Power :

Even they shall stain this slaughtering Sword with
Blood :

Mercy shall find no Room within this Breast ;

While *Appius* lives.

Val. Remember, *Romans*, now

The Fate of brave *Dentatus* and *Virginia*. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E

SCENE V.

VIRGINIUS at the Head of a Party on Mount Aventine.

OH Romans! Fellow-Citizens, attend:
I call to witness the immortal Gods,
Appius alone is guilty of the Crime
Which I've committed. Force me not from hence,
From the Society of human Kind,
To seek my Fate: Where is it I could range
To find one Dawn of Comfort break upon me?
The inward Grief of being a Parricide,
The Murderer of my Daughter, will for ever
Leave a sad Sorrow to afflict my Soul.
I would have willingly laid down my Life
A Sacrifice for hers, could she have liv'd,
Preserv'd her Honour, and her Liberty.
But that was meant for the foul Tyrant's Will:
'Twas Pity therefore made me the more cruel.
I rather chose to lose her, than with Shame
To see her fall a Victim to his Lust.
Nor would I now out-live her Memory
A Moment longer. But hoping your Assistance,
I seek Revenge.—Oh pity this my Age,
My Grievs, and my Misfortunes!

Sald. Come, Virginus,
By Heav'n we'll have Revenge.—Now fellow Soldiers,
It is for Liberty we draw the Sword;
Revenge and Liberty is what we claim. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI. A Garden.

APPIUS alone.

NOW all my Hopes are lost, the gathering Crowd
Repulse my Force, and pour destructive on me,
The kindling Flames already fill my Palace,
While the Seditious plunder and destroy

Al

All they can meet with.—Curse my adverse Stars!
 Yet let me not fall at last a trembling Coward,
 To seek a Refuge in this still Retreat.
 Let Glory, let Ambition swell my Soul
 Above that Thought.—No! I will seek my Foes,
 And urge my Fate.

Virg. enters with Soldiers] This Way, my Friend,
 he came,

This Shade he sought, to hide his guilty Head;
 Guard well the Entrance.

App. Yes, rebellious Slaves,
 Thou cruel Murderer—here indeed I fought
 To find you out, to rid the Earth of Monsters.

Virg. Ha! Tyrant, at your Heart— [*Appius falls.*
 Thanks to the Gods,
 That Rome is wrested from your impious Power,
 What Noise is that? ———

Enter ICILIUS, HORATIUS, and VALERIUS, &c.

Ice. Where is this vile *Decemvir*?

Virg. He's there, *Iceilius*—His pernicious Soul
 This Moment burst its Passage in a Groan;
 Justice has had its Ends.—But oh! *Iceilius*,
 Let these my Tears plead a Forgiveness from you,
 These, and my Silence now, must urge my Pardon.

Ice. Oh good *Virginus*! I am well assur'd,
 What you have done was sad Necessity;
 I own, your Cause for Grief does equal mine.

Hor. Come Romans; since our Liberty, and Rome
 Are rescued from the Tyrants, bless the Gods.—

This Day, no less than Freedom was our Cause,
 We fought for Freedom, and our antient Laws:
 In every Place, in every distant Time,
 The wond'ring World will bless this happy Clime,
 May our Example live to future Fame,
 And ev'ry Tyrant tremble at the Name.

